

Año Nuevo State Reserve and State Park

Key Natural Resources

Hydrology

- **Watersheds:**
Gazos Creek—identified as priority watershed for restoration of habitat and recovery for coho salmon and steelhead trout.
Año Nuevo Creek, Green Oaks Creek—Designated as Least Disturbed Watersheds* in the Santa Cruz County General Plan (1994).
 *Watersheds relatively undisturbed by development and worthy of recognition for their importance; designated for continued protection.

Native Vegetation Communities



Coastal Strand, with Dunes in Background

- **Arroyo Willow Alliance** (Central Coast Arroyo Willow): found adjacent to streams
- **California Oatgrass Alliance:** found in grasslands
- **Sand-Verbena–Beach Bursage Association:** found on sand dunes and sandy locations next to the coastal strand
- **Red Alder Alliance:** limited to locations along Gazos and Old Woman's creeks.

Above identified by the California Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDDB) as rare natural communities.

- **Monterey pine stands:** may be a result of plantings, remnants of what may have been a larger population, or part of a natural successional occurrence from indigenous stands less than a mile away. Natural occurrences are identified as rare natural community by the CNDDDB.

Other native plant communities include Canyon/Interior Live Oak, Coyote Brush Alliance, Douglas-fir, Redwood Alliance, and Knobcone Pine.

Native Plants

- **Special Status Plants:**
 - Coast wallflower.

Suitable to marginally suitable habitat exists for 29 other special status species found in the region.

Wildlife Habitat



Mosaic of Habitats at
Año Nuevo State Park

- **Coastal habitat extremely important**, especially for birds and marine mammals.
- **Valuable mosaic of habitats**, including aquatic pond habitat, grasslands, wetlands, oak woodlands, and redwood/Douglas-fir forest.
- **Valuable riparian habitat** associated with five creeks.
- **Año Nuevo Island**: largest and most diverse seabird breeding colony in the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary.
- Part of an extensive system of public lands that provides **important habitat linkages**.

Native Animals



Northern Elephant Seal Bull



San Francisco Garter Snake

- **Northern elephant seal**: main visitor attraction
- **Special Status Animals:**
 - **California red-legged frog** (riparian habitats)
 - **Ensatina** (redwood and Douglas-fir forest)
 - **San Francisco garter snake** (aquatic and riparian habitats)
 - **Southwestern pond turtle**: (ponds, plus grasslands for laying eggs)
 - **Numerous bird species**, including California brown pelican, bank swallow, peregrine falcon, western snowy plover, rhinoceros auklet, northern harrier, white-tailed kite, Cooper's hawk, purple martin, Vaux's swift, loggerhead shrike
 - **Steller (northern) sea lion**
 - **Steelhead and coho salmon** (aquatic habitats): part of the Central California Coast Evolutionary Significant Unit—a distinct population of Pacific salmon defined as a "species" under the Endangered Species Act, and listed as threatened.

Non-native plants and animals



Bullfrog Preying on Western Pond Turtle

Invasive and difficult to eradicate plant species:

- **Eucalyptus**
- **Scotch broom**
- **European beachgrass**
- **Fennel**
- **Poison hemlock**
- **Gorse**
- **Cape ivy**
- **Harding grass**
- **Jubata grass**

- **Wild (feral) pigs:**

Can cause significant damage to natural resources by disturbing soil, uprooting native plants, and harming ground-nesting birds and other native wildlife.

- **Bullfrogs:**

Feed on native amphibians and other species.

- **European starlings:**

Out-compete native cavity-nesting birds for nest sites.